

Eating Smart with Diabetes: The Filipino Guide

Which carbs spike blood sugar, which ones don't,
and how to **protect your kidneys & heart**



1 in 3

Filipinos has diabetes or prediabetes

<7%

HbA1c target for most patients

30–40%

Glucose spike cut by eating order alone

1 What is the **Glycemic Index (GI)** — and Why It Matters for Filipinos

Low GI < 55

Slow, steady glucose rise — Eat freely · GOOD

Medium GI 56–70

Moderate glucose spike — Eat carefully · LIMIT

High GI > 70

Fast, sharp glucose spike — Limit or avoid

GL (Glycemic Load) = $GI \times \text{grams of carbs per serving} \div 100$. It is more practical than GI alone because it accounts for portion size. **GL <10** = Low · **GL 11–19** = Medium · **GL ≥20** = High. Pages 2–3 show both GI and GL for each food.

2 The Filipino **Diabetes Plate**

1/2

NON-STARCHY VEG

- Ampalaya / okra
- Kangkong / sitaw
- Talong / kamatis
- Malunggay / labanos

1/4

LEAN PROTEIN

- Grilled isda / tilapia
- Chicken breast
- Tokwa / monggo
- Boiled egg (1 pc)

1/4

QUALITY CARBS

- 1/2 cup brown/basmati rice
- Boiled kamote
- Rolled oats

3 **Rice Strategies** — Lower the GI Without Giving It Up

- TIP 1** Cool overnight in fridge → resistant starch forms → lowers GI by ~20–30%. Reheat before eating.
- TIP 2** Add 1 **tsp calamansi juice or vinegar** to the rice → acid slows starch digestion, lowers GI ~20%.
- TIP 3** Eat rice **LAST** after vegetables and protein → blunts the post-meal glucose spike by 30–40%.
- TIP 4** Switch to **basmati or brown rice** (GI 58–68) and keep portions to 1/2 cup cooked per meal.
- TIP 5** Mix with **monggo or add okra** — soluble fiber slows absorption and drops the meal's overall GI.

4 Eat in the **Right Order** — Meal Sequencing Cuts the Spike

1st: Vegetables

Ampalaya, okra, sitaw, pinakbet first

2nd: Protein

Grilled isda, tinola chicken, tokwa, egg

3rd: Carbs Last

Rice, kamote or oats — smaller portion

↓30–40%

Post-meal spike vs. rice first

5 Your Blood Glucose **Target Numbers**

Know Your Numbers (ADA 2025)

Fasting Glucose

80–130

mg/dL

2-Hour Post-Meal

<180

mg/dL

HbA1c (most patients)

<7%

every 3–6 months

HbA1c (elderly/frail)

<8%

less strict target

Hypoglycemia Alert

<70

mg/dL — treat now

BP Target (w/ DM)

<130/80

mmHg

Targets are individualized — ask your doctor if you are elderly, pregnant, or have CKD or frequent hypoglycemia.

6 Simple **Filipino Kitchen Swaps** for Diabetes

REMOVE

White rice (3+ cups/day)

→

USE INSTEAD

1/2 cup cold/basmati rice + boiled kamote

3-in-1 coffee / softdrinks

→

Black barako coffee or salabat (no sugar)

Instant pancit canton / lugaw

→

Sotanghon soup with vegetables (GI 35)

Puto / kakanin merienda

→

1 boiled egg + 1 guava or green mango

Sweetened juice drinks (Tang, Royal)

→

Fresh calamansi juice (unsweetened) + water

Ripe mango (whole fruit)

→

Bayabas/guava or 1/2 green mango (GI 31–41)

Fried banana cue / turon

→

Boiled unripe saba (GI 52) — no sugar added

HOW TO READ PAGES 2–3: **AVOID** = High GI >70 or High GL ≥20 **LIMIT** = Medium GI 56–70 or GL 11–19

 GOOD = Low GI <55 and Low GL ≤10 73 = GI value 33 = GL value

Food Item (Filipino Name)	Typical Serving	GI	GL	Rating	Key Note
A · BIGAS AT BUTIL — RICE & STAPLE GRAINS					
White rice, steamed (kanin)	1 cup cooked	73	33	AVOID	Biggest blood sugar spike in the Filipino diet; replace with ½ cup brown/basmati rice + kamote
Glutinous rice / malagkit (biko)	½ cup cooked	98	34	AVOID	Highest GI staple in Filipino cuisine; near-pure amylopectin starch — rapid glucose release
Lugaw / arroz caldo (rice porridge)	1 bowl 300 mL	78	20	AVOID	Over-cooking breaks starch into simple glucose; spikes faster than steamed rice; try oatmeal instead
Brown rice (pilit na kayumanggi)	1 cup cooked	68	31	LIMIT	Only slightly lower GI than white; main benefit is fiber and micronutrients; still needs portion control
Basmati rice (aged, cooked)	1 cup cooked	58	26	LIMIT	Best rice variety for diabetes; long-chain amylose digests more slowly — keep to ½ cup per meal
Rolled oats, soaked overnight	½ cup dry	42	11	GOOD	Best breakfast carb; beta-glucan soluble fiber blunts glucose rise; do NOT add condensed milk
Monggo / green mung bean (boiled)	1 cup cooked	31	11	GOOD	Excellent low-GI protein + fiber staple; sauté with malunggay in canola oil for a diabetes-friendly meal
Red kidney beans / munggo pula	1 cup cooked	24	8	GOOD	Very low GI; high in resistant starch and protein; use in soups as a rice replacement
B · TINAPAY AT MIE — BREAD, PASTA & NOODLES					
White bread (Gardenia, Bimbo)	2 slices	71	20	AVOID	Digested almost as fast as white rice; refined flour → rapid glucose spike; choose whole grain instead
Instant noodles (Pancit Canton)	1 pack	72	28	AVOID	Palm-oil fried noodles + very high sodium + MSG; double hit of high GI + high GL; worst noodle choice
Puto (steamed white rice cake)	3 pieces	75	22	AVOID	Refined rice starch, rapidly digested; popular merienda but spikes blood sugar quickly
Whole wheat bread (fibrous)	2 slices	69	16	LIMIT	Marginally better than white; check label — "wheat flour" ≠ whole grain; look for "whole wheat" first
Pasta / spaghetti (al dente, plain)	1 cup cooked	57	22	LIMIT	Al dente = lower GI; overcooking raises GI; avoid sweet Filipino-style spaghetti sauce
Sotanghon / glass noodles	½ cup cooked	35	10	GOOD	Best noodle for diabetes; mung bean starch is naturally low GI; use in soup with vegetables and chicken
Bihon rice noodles (steamed)	½ cup cooked	40	12	GOOD	Lower GI than wheat pasta; avoid stir-fried pancit with sweet soy sauce — adds sugar fast
C · ROOT CROPS AT STARCHY VEG — ROOT CROPS & STARCHY VEGETABLES					
Kalabasa / pumpkin (boiled)	1 cup	75	13	AVOID	Very high GI despite low GL; eat only small portions combined with protein to blunt spike
Cassava / kamoteng kahoy (boiled)	½ cup	65	15	LIMIT	Medium GI; avoid processed cassava (cassava cake, nilupak with sugar) — GI becomes very high
Corn on the cob / mais (boiled)	1 medium cob	59	12	LIMIT	Whole corn better than cornstarch; fiber intact; avoid corn syrup products; good occasional merienda
Kamote / sweet potato (boiled)	1 medium 150g	44	12	GOOD	Best root crop for diabetes; boiling is key — baking raises GI to 94; rich in fiber and potassium
Gabi / taro (boiled, plain)	½ cup	54	8	GOOD	Good low-GI root crop; use in sinigang instead of potato; avoid gabi desserts with sugar or coconut cream
D · PRUTAS — FRUITS					
Watermelon (pakwan)	2 cups cubed	80	8	AVOID	Very high GI despite low GL; fast glucose release; choose guava or green mango instead
Very ripe mango / hinog na mangga	1 medium	73	17	AVOID	The riper, the higher the GI; at peak ripeness fructose and glucose spike blood sugar fast
Lanzones, lychee, rambutan	10 pieces	72	15	AVOID	High simple sugar content; easy to over-eat; limit to 5 pieces maximum if eaten with protein
Ripe mango (firm), half portion	½ small mango	60	14	LIMIT	High fructose even at medium GI; limit to ½ small mango; eat with protein to slow absorption
Papaya (ripe, hinog na papaya)	1 cup cubed	59	8	LIMIT	Moderate GI but low GL; reasonable in portions; enzyme papain may modestly aid glucose metabolism
Pineapple / pinya (fresh)	½ cup	66	9	LIMIT	Higher GI than expected; bromelain enzyme may have modest benefits; limit to small portions
Bayabas / guava (green-yellow)	1 medium	31	4	GOOD	Highest fiber of all Philippine fruits; excellent for blood sugar control; eat 1–2 daily as merienda
Green mango / hilaw na mangga	1 small	41	5	GOOD	Same fruit as ripe mango — but low GI when unripe; very popular and diabetes-friendly
Avocado / abokado	½ medium	15	1	GOOD	Near-zero carb; rich in heart-healthy monounsaturated fat; pairs well with rice to lower overall GI
Dalandan / ponkan / suha (citrus)	1 medium	38	5	GOOD	Slow-releasing fructose + vitamin C; eat whole fruit — juice removes fiber and concentrates sugars

Food Item (Filipino Name)	Typical Serving	GI	GL	Rating	Key Note
E · GULAY — NON-STARCHY VEGETABLES · EAT FREELY · LOW GI ALWAYS					
Ampalaya / bitter melon	1 cup	17	1	GOOD	Traditional diabetes superfood; charantin and polypeptide-p have documented glucose-lowering effects
Okra (steamed or in sinigang)	1 cup	20	2	GOOD	Viscous mucilage fiber slows glucose absorption in the gut; eat daily — best vegetable for diabetes
Malunggay / moringa (leaves)	½ cup	20	1	GOOD	Rich in quercetin and chlorogenic acid; modestly lowers blood sugar; add to tinola, sinigang, or monggo
Kangkong / water spinach (ginisa)	1 cup	15	1	GOOD	Abundant and affordable; sauté in canola oil + garlic; excellent iron and vitamin source
Sitaw · talong · labanos	1 cup	28	3	GOOD	All low-GI vegetables; fill half the plate with these before eating rice; no quantity restriction
Pinakbet (canola oil, no bagoong)	1 cup	22	3	GOOD	Ideal Filipino diabetes dish; okra + ampalaya + talong; skip bagoong (sodium) and lard
Kalabasa / pumpkin (in sinigang)	½ cup	75	7	LIMIT	High GI but very low GL in normal portion; always eat with protein in a full meal to blunt impact
F · PROTINA AT LEGUMES — PROTEINS & LEGUMES					
Galunggong / round scad (grilled)	2–3 pieces	0	0	GOOD	Best budget omega-3 fish in PH; no glycemic impact; grill or steam — avoid frying in coconut oil
Tilapia / bangus (grilled/steamed)	1 medium	0	0	GOOD	Zero GI; lean protein that slows glucose absorption when eaten before carbs; eat daily
Sardinas sa kamatis (canned)	1 can	5	0	GOOD	Affordable omega-3; zero glycemic load; choose tomato sauce — NOT oil; watch sodium in CKD
Chicken breast, grilled (no skin)	1 piece	0	0	GOOD	Zero GI; the quarter-plate protein; tinola with malunggay is one of the best diabetic Filipino meals
Tokwa / firm tofu (steamed)	½ block	15	1	GOOD	Plant protein; replaces pork in adobo and scrambles; soy protein modestly improves insulin sensitivity
Boiled egg (itlog)	1 large	0	0	GOOD	Zero carbs; excellent merienda protein; limit to 1/day if LDL is also elevated
Longganisa / tocino (sweet-cured)	2 links	45	5	LIMIT	Added sugar in cure raises GI for a "protein" food; high sat fat + sodium compound cardiovascular risk
Lechon / chicharon / pork skin	100g	0	0	AVOID	GI is zero but saturated fat impairs insulin sensitivity over time; worsens CKD and cardiovascular risk
G · INUMIN — BEVERAGES					
Softdrinks (Coke, Sprite, Royal)	1 can 330 mL	65	26	AVOID	35–40g sugar per can; liquid glucose has almost no delay — one can ≈ nearly 3 tsp of sugar direct
3-in-1 coffee (Nescafe, Kopiko)	1 sachet	70	18	AVOID	Non-dairy creamer (palm-oil fat) + sugar = simultaneous fat + carb spike; switch to black brewed barako
Powdered juice (Tang, Zesto)	1 glass 250 mL	68	22	AVOID	Pure sugar + artificial color + no nutrients; one of the largest contributors to diabetes in Filipino diet
Commercial fruit juice (Minute Maid)	1 glass 250 mL	68	19	AVOID	Fiber removed; fructose concentrated; spikes blood sugar almost like sweetened drinks despite "fruit" label
Milo / Ovaltine (2 tsp powder)	1 cup	55	14	LIMIT	Moderate sugar; use only 1 tsp powder with skim milk; never add condensed milk; limit to once/day
Buko / coconut juice (no sugar)	1 coconut	55	11	LIMIT	Natural sugars; potassium-rich; acceptable if renal function is normal; avoid bottled sweetened versions
Black coffee / barako (no sugar)	1–2 cups	0	0	GOOD	Zero GI; chlorogenic acid improves insulin sensitivity; 2 cups/day associated with lower T2DM risk
Salabat / ginger tea (no arnibal)	1 cup	5	0	GOOD	Gingerol improves insulin signaling; ideal post-meal drink; anti-inflammatory; traditional remedy
Unsweetened calamansi juice	1 glass + water	30	2	GOOD	Vitamin C; low sugar when no arnibal added; also lowers GI of rice when added directly to cooked rice
H · KAKANIN AT MATAMIS — FILIPINO SWEETS & DESSERTS					
Biko / sinukmani (malagkit + gata)	1 piece	95	48	AVOID	Highest GI and GL of all Filipino sweets; malagkit + coconut cream + brown sugar = triple spike trigger
Leche flan	1 slice 100g	62	30	AVOID	Egg yolk + condensed milk + sugar = very high GL per slice; spikes blood sugar quickly
Halo-halo (full serving)	1 large glass	80	36	AVOID	Condensed milk + ube ice cream + arnibal + sweetened beans = multiple sugar layers; worst dessert for DM
Maja blanca / bibingka / champorado	1 serving	72	24	AVOID	All high-GI, high-GL Filipino desserts; refined carb + sugar + coconut cream combination to avoid
White sugar / arnibal / condensed milk	1 tsp / 2 tbsp	65+	14+	AVOID	Pure glucose/fructose; remove from drinks, rice, condiments; stevia or monk fruit are zero-GI alternatives
Boiled saba banana (unripe)	2 pieces	52	14	LIMIT	Resistant starch when slightly unripe; do NOT fry or add sugar; eat as merienda with 1 boiled egg
Puto (plain, small)	2 pieces	68	15	LIMIT	Lower fat than most kakanin but still high refined carb; if eaten, pair with protein, keep to 2 small pieces
Bayabas / guava (fresh, as dessert)	1–2 medium	31	4	GOOD	Best dessert after any Filipino meal; high fiber, high vitamin C, very low GL; eat instead of kakanin

🍽️ 7-Day Filipino Diabetes Meal Plan — ½ Veg · ¼ Protein · ¼ Carbs · Eat in Order

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Merienda	Dinner
Mon	Quaker oatmeal + boiled egg + black barako coffee	Sinigang na tilapia + ½ cup cold rice + pinakbet (okra + talong)	1 guava + 1 boiled egg	Monggo guisado with malunggay + boiled kamote (no rice)
Tue	Ginisang ampalaya at itlog + ½ cup brown rice + salabat	Tinolang manok (breast, no skin, with malunggay) + ½ cup rice	Green mango + 30g pili nuts	Inihaw na bangus (no skin) + ginisang kangkong + ½ cup basmati rice
Wed	Overnight oats (calamansi, no sugar) + dalandan	Sardinas sa kamatis + sitaw at kalabasa guisado + ½ cup cold rice	2 boiled saba (unripe) + salabat	Chicken adobo sa puti (breast, no skin) + steamed labanos + ½ cup rice
Thu	Scrambled tokwa + tomato + black coffee (no sugar)	Grilled galunggong + pinakbet (canola oil, no bagoong) + ½ cup rice	1–2 guavas fresh	Monggo at dilis + kangkong + boiled kamote instead of rice
Fri	Oatmeal + 1 boiled egg + calamansi juice (unsweetened)	Sinigang na bangus sa sampalok + okra + talong + ½ cup rice	½ avocado + water	Steamed tilapia + malunggay soup + sotanghon guisado (no sugar)
Sat	Scrambled egg + tomato + brown rice (½ cup) + black coffee	Paksiw na bangus (light vinegar, no pork) + sitaw + ½ cup cold rice	Ponkan + 1 boiled egg	Lumpiang sariwa (fresh, not fried) + tokwa filling + ½ cup rice
Sun	Overnight oats + sliced green mango (no sugar) + salabat	Nilagang manok (breast only) + malunggay + boiled kamote (no rice)	1 guava + water	Sardinas + ampalaya con huevo (1 egg) + ½ cup basmati rice

Diabetes Medications & Food Interactions	
Metformin	Take WITH meals to avoid nausea. Long-term use depletes Vitamin B12 — check B12 yearly. No food causes a dangerous interaction.
Sulfonylureas (glibenclamide, glicipizide)	MUST eat within 30 min of taking the tablet. Skipping or delaying meals → hypoglycemia risk. Keep sugar (3 pcs candy) on hand.
SGLT2 Inhibitors (empagliflozin, dapagliflozin)	Drink 6–8 glasses water/day (glucose lost via urine → dehydration risk). Reduce rice and sugar for best effect. Avoid if UTI active.
GLP-1 Agonists (semaglutide, dulaglutide)	Nausea worsens with high-fat meals (lechon, gata). Eat small, low-fat meals. Avoid large rice portions — delays gastric emptying further.
Insulin	Keep carb intake consistent at each meal (same rice amount daily). Skipping or late meals → hypo/hyperglycemia. Never skip a meal after rapid insulin.

Lifestyle Changes That Lower HbA1c

🚶 Walk After Meals

↓ Post-meal glucose 10–15%

Even 10 minutes of brisk walking after eating significantly lowers the 2-hour glucose spike. Do it after lunch and dinner.

🏋️ Lose 5–7% Body Weight

↓ HbA1c 0.5–1%

In prediabetes, 5–7% weight loss prevents progression to diabetes in 58% of cases. Focus on rice portions first.

✂️ Cut Rice in Half

Fastest HbA1c drop

Reducing white rice from 3 cups to 1 cup/day is often the single most impactful diet change for Filipino patients.

😴 Sleep 7–8 Hours

Improves insulin sensitivity

Sleep deprivation raises cortisol and glucose. Poor sleep can raise fasting glucose by 10–15 mg/dL.

⚠️ Special Situations

Fasting (religious): Consult your doctor first. Sulfonylurea/insulin doses must be adjusted. Eat suhur with low-GI foods (oatmeal, monggo). Break fast with dates + water, then protein before carbs.

Sick day: Never skip diabetes medications when ill. Monitor glucose every 4–6 hours. Drink clear fluids. Contact your doctor if glucose >300 mg/dL or you cannot eat.

For educational use only. This guide does not replace your physician's or dietitian's advice. Glycemic targets and medication adjustments are individualized. References: ADA Standards of Care 2025 · Atkinson et al. Am J Clin Nutr 2021 (GI Tables) · KDIGO 2024 · FNRI Philippine Food Composition Tables 2023.

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The Filipino Glycemic Plate

A simple plate to build every meal the right way for better blood sugar control.



THE FILIPINO GLYCEMIC PLATE

A Simple Plate for Better Blood Sugar Control

Fill your plate the right way. Enjoy Filipino food. Support your health.



FOR PATIENTS & CLINICIANS
Use this plate as a daily guide to build balanced meals that help manage blood sugar.

3 STEPS TO BUILD YOUR PLATE

1 ½ NON-STARCHY VEGETABLES

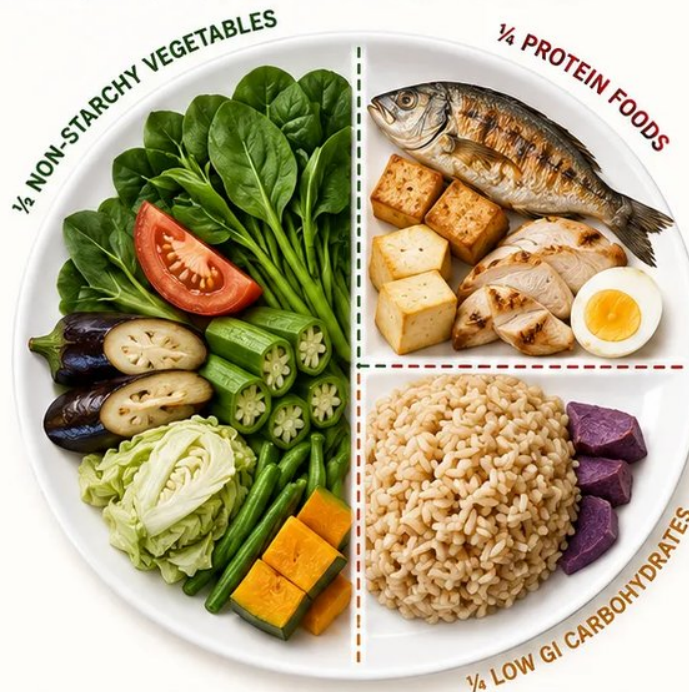
Choose a variety of colors and cook simply with less oil.

2 ¼ PROTEIN FOODS

Choose lean protein sources. Include fish and plant-based proteins.

3 ¼ LOW GI CARBOHYDRATES

Choose high-fiber, low GI carbs. Control your portion of rice.



HOW MUCH IS ¼ PLATE?



PROTEIN

About the size of your palm and thickness of your little finger.



CARBOHYDRATES

About the size of your fist.



VEGETABLES

Fill the rest of your plate with both hands.

CHOOSE WATER AS YOUR DRINK



- Water is best.
- Avoid sugary drinks and juice.
- Limit alcohol.

WHY THIS PLATE WORKS



Helps stabilize blood sugar levels



Provides fiber, vitamins, and minerals



Supports heart, kidney, and gut health



Helps with weight management

HEALTHY FATS IN MODERATION



Avocado



Nuts (unsalted)



Olive oil

Add small amounts for heart health and better satiety.

SMART SWAPS FOR BETTER BLOOD SUGAR



White rice



Brown rice (or mix with red rice)



Pandesal



Whole wheat or high-fiber bread



Lechon kawali



Inihaw na isda or grilled chicken



Sugary drinks



Water, infused water, or unsweetened tea



Halo-halo



Fresh fruit in moderation



KEY TAKEAWAY

Balance, variety, and portion control are key to managing blood sugar. Small daily choices, big lifelong benefits.



Eat mindfully. Move daily. Check your blood sugar. Work with your healthcare team.



Your plate today, a healthier you tomorrow.

Fill half your plate with non-starchy vegetables, a quarter with protein, and a quarter with low-GI carbohydrates — and choose water as your drink.

Filipino Food Glycemic Index Master Chart

The glycemic index of common Filipino foods at a glance — lower is gentler on blood sugar.

 FILIPINO FOOD GI MASTER CHART Know your choices. Balance your plate. Better blood sugar control.  FOR PATIENTS & CLINICIANS Use this chart to guide food choices and build balanced meals that support better blood sugar control.			
	LOW GI (55 or less) Better Choices – Eat Often	MEDIUM GI (56–69) Enjoy in Moderation	HIGH GI (70 or higher) Limit – Eat Less Often
 RICE & RICE DISHES (1 cup cooked)	 • Brown rice (well-cooked) • Red rice (dinorado) • Rice + monggo • Rice + saba (plantain) 50 GI	 • White rice (regular) • Sinangag (fried rice) • Rice + beans • Java rice 58 GI	 • Malagkit na bigas (glutinous rice) • Rice cake (puto) • Rice porridge (lugaw) 87 GI
 NOODLES & PANCIT (1 cup cooked)	 • Mung bean noodles (bihon) • Sotanghon (cellophane noodles) • Pancit with vegetables (less sauce) 45 GI	 • Canton noodles • Pancit palabok • Pancit luglugin 61 GI	 • Pancit miki • Pancit bihon guisado (oily, with sauce) 75 GI
 BREAD, BAKERY & SNACKS (Per piece/serving)	 • Whole wheat pandesal • Oatmeal bread • Graham crackers (plain) 45 GI	 • Pandesal (white) • Ensaymada (small) • Monay 62 GI	 • Ensaymada (regular) • White bread • Donut 78 GI
 ROOTS, TUBERS & PLANTAINS (1/2 cup cooked)	 • Camote (karnote) • Gabi • Monggo (mung beans) • Saba (green) 42 GI	 • Ube • Saging na saba (ripe) • Nilagang saging 58 GI	 • White potato • Cassava (kamoteng kahoy) • Saging na lakatan (ripe) 85 GI
 FRUITS (1 medium piece) (1 cup = for berries)	 • Bayabas (guava) • Apple • Papaya • Berries (1 cup) 35 GI	 • Mango (carabao) • Pineapple • Banana (latundan) 59 GI	 • Pakwan (watermelon) • Saging na latok/lakatan (very ripe) • Langka (jackfruit) 75 GI
 SWEETS & DESSERTS (Per serving)	 • Buko (young coconut) • Fresh fruit (in season) • Yogurt (unsweetened) 40 GI	 • Halo-halo (small) • Ginataang bilo-bilo (small) • Turon (1 small) 65 GI	 • Leche flan • Mais con yelo • Sweetened drinks (soda, juice) 85+ GI

WHAT IS GI?
GI (Glycemic Index) ranks how quickly a carbohydrate food raises blood sugar on a scale of 0–100.
Low GI: 55 or less
Medium GI: 56–69
High GI: 70 or higher

TIPS FOR BETTER CHOICES

- ✓ Choose more low GI foods most of the time.
- ✓ Pair carbs with protein, healthy fats, and vegetables.
- ✓ Watch your portion size.
- ✓ Move after meals.
- ✓ Stay hydrated.

BUILD A BALANCED FILIPINO PLATE



Remember:
Small daily choices lead to big changes in your blood sugar and your future.

 Your culture. Your food. Your health.
Sustainable changes. Lasting results.

 This chart is a guide. Individual needs may vary.
Work with your clinician for personalized advice.

 Proud of our food.
Committed to our health.

Favor low-GI choices (<55), limit medium-GI foods (56–70), and minimize high-GI foods (>70) — especially in large portions.

Filipino Dishes: Modify vs Limit

You don't have to give up Filipino food — make smart changes, and limit when needed.



FILIPINO DISHES: MODIFY vs. LIMIT

You don't have to give up Filipino food.

Make smart choices. Modify when you can. Limit when needed.



FOR PATIENTS & CLINICIANS

Use this guide to help build realistic, culturally appropriate meal plans for better blood sugar control.



MODIFY

Enjoy these favorites—make small changes for better blood sugar control.



CHICKEN ADOBO

Traditional adobo can be high in sodium.

- Use less soy sauce
- More garlic, vinegar, and pepper
- Choose skinless chicken



SINIGANG

Good choice! Watch the portion of rice.

- Use less sodium (less patis/asin)
- Load up on vegetables
- Choose lean meat or fish



PINAKBET

Naturally high in fiber and nutrients.

- Use less bagoong
- Add more ampalaya, sitaw, and leafy greens
- Cook with less oil



GINATAANG GULAY

Coconut milk adds fat and calories.

- Use light coconut milk or dilute with water
- Add more vegetables
- Use small amount of coconut milk



PAKBET WITH FISH

Great combo of fiber and lean protein.

- Grilled or steamed fish
- Less oil and bagoong
- More vegetables, less rice



LUMPIANG GULAY

Better option than meat lumpia.

- Bake or air-fry instead of deep-fry
- Use whole wheat wrapper if available
- Watch the sauce (often high in sugar)



LIMIT

These dishes are higher in calories, saturated fat, salt, or refined carbs. Enjoy occasionally and in small portions.



LECHON KAWALI

High in saturated fat and calories.

- Very high in fat
- Increases heart disease risk
- Limit to small portions, rarely



KARE-KARE

Peanut sauce is high in fat and calories.

- High in saturated fat
- Watch portion size
- Choose leaner protein or enjoy occasionally



PANCIT CANTON

High in refined carbs, sodium, and fat.

- Large portions spike blood sugar
- High sodium
- Limit and pair with vegetables



HALO-HALO

High in sugar and calories.

- Sweetened ingredients and condensed milk
- Big sugar load
- Enjoy small, once in a while



BANANA TURON

Fried and high in sugar.

- Deep-fried + sugar = high calories
- Raises blood sugar quickly
- Limit, not daily



SIOPAO / ASADO SIOPAO

Refined flour and high in fat and sugar.

- Refined carbs
- Sweet filling
- Enjoy occasionally and watch portion size

SMART TIPS FOR EVERY MEAL



Fill half your plate with vegetables.



Control your rice portion.



Choose lean protein.



Use less oil, salt, and sugar.



Move more every day.

PORTION GUIDE (COOKED)



Rice
½ cup
(1 small rice bowl)



Protein
Palm-size
(thickness = little finger)



Carbs
Fist-size
(rice, noodles, root crops)



Vegetables
2 cupped hands



REMEMBER

It's not about eliminating your favorite foods. It's about portion, balance, and smart choices every day.



Small changes today. Big impact tomorrow.
Better food choices. Better blood sugar control. Better life.



Proud of our food.
Committed to our health.

Small changes today, big impact tomorrow — better food choices, better blood sugar control.

Your 7-Day Filipino Diabetic Meal Plan

A full week of balanced, blood-sugar-friendly Filipino meals from breakfast to dinner.



7-DAY DIABETIC MEAL PLAN

FILIPINO FOOD, BALANCED FOR BETTER BLOOD SUGAR

Healthy, satisfying meals using local foods you love.



FOR PATIENTS & CLINICIANS

This 7-day plan follows the Plate Method, balanced portions, and lower GI choices to help manage blood sugar.

DAILY REMINDERS

- ✓ Drink water
- ✓ Choose whole foods
- ✓ Control portions
- ✓ Move more
- ✓ Sleep well
- ✓ Check your blood sugar
- ✓ Work with your healthcare team

PORTION GUIDE (Cooked)



Rice / Carbs
½ cup (small bowl)



Protein
Palm-size (thickness of your palm)



Carbohydrates
Fist-size (rice, noodles, root crops)



Vegetables
2 cupped hands

IMPORTANT

This meal plan is a guide. Adjust portions based on your needs, activity level, medications, and blood sugar goals. Consult your healthcare provider or dietitian for personalized advice.



DAY	BREAKFAST (Start Your Day)	LUNCH (Energize)	DINNER (Light & Satisfying)	SNACKS (Choose 1-2)
MONDAY	Oatmeal with saging na saba (½ pc) and chia seeds	Grilled bangus Brown rice (½ cup) Ensaladang talong	Tinolang manok with papaya Brown rice (½ cup)	1 small guava or 10 pcs kamote chips
TUESDAY	Veggie omelet with kamatis, sibuyas, at malunggay Whole wheat pandesal	Pinakbet with lean pork Brown rice (½ cup)	Ginisang monggo with malunggay Brown rice (½ cup)	1 small apple or ½ cup buko (young coconut)
WEDNESDAY	Champorado (made with tablea & less sugar)	Grilled tuna Ensaladang talong Brown rice (½ cup)	Sinigang na baboy sa miso with gulay Brown rice (½ cup)	1 boiled egg or ½ cup mixed nuts (unsalted)
THURSDAY	Greek yogurt with bayabas and chia seeds	Chicken adobo (less oil, less salt) Brown rice (½ cup) Atchara (small)	Ginisang upo with tofu & hipon Brown rice (½ cup)	1 small banana (latundan) or cucumber sticks
FRIDAY	Porridge (lugaw) with tokwa, ginger, and malunggay	Paksiw na isda Brown rice (½ cup) Ensaladang pipino	Bicol express (use coconut milk in moderation) Brown rice (½ cup)	½ cup papaya or 1 tbsp peanut butter (no sugar added)
SATURDAY	Whole wheat bread with avocado and tomato	Beef nilaga with pechay & sayote Brown rice (½ cup)	Tortang talong Brown rice (½ cup) Ensaladang kamatis	1 small orange or ½ cup edamame
SUNDAY	Saging na saba (1 pc) with peanut butter (1 tsp) and black coffee	Lechon manok (skinless) Brown rice (½ cup) Ensalada	Munggo guisado with malunggay Brown rice (½ cup)	1 small pear or ½ cup roasted chickpeas

SMART SWAPS FOR BETTER BLOOD SUGAR



White rice



Brown rice or red rice



Sweetened drinks



Water, calamansi water or unsweetened tea



Fried foods



Grilled, steamed or air-fried



Fresh fruit in moderation

FILIPINO FLAVORS, DIABETES-FRIENDLY TIPS



Use less oil, less salt, less sugar.



Flavor with garlic, onion, ginger, lemon, vinegar, herbs.



Add more gulay (vegetables) every meal.



Eat at regular times. Avoid skipping meals.



BETTER CHOICES TODAY. BETTER HEALTH TOMORROW.



Serve with love. Live well.



Move daily. Stay active.



Small steps. Big results.

For educational use only. This reference does not replace individualized dietary advice. Targets vary with kidney function, medication, and individual risk. References: ADA Standards of Care 2025 · FNRI Philippine Food Composition Tables.

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